



## **Advisory Announcement**

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### **2020 Lower Cook Inlet Commercial Salmon Fishery Season Summary**

The 2020 Lower Cook Inlet Area commercial salmon harvest was 2.5 million fish. The harvest was composed of 537 Chinook, 205,388 sockeye, 3,949 coho, 2.3 million pink, and 9,482 chum salmon (Table 1), of which 1.6 million (64%) were commercial harvest and 885,762 (36%) were hatchery cost recovery. Hatchery salmon egg take was below the anticipated goal. The cost recovery goal of \$5.4 million was not achieved with only \$2.3 million (43%) harvested. All data are considered preliminary.

#### ***Southern District***

The 2020 preseason commercial harvest forecast for the Southern District, was 80,900 sockeye and 116,300 pink salmon with an additional 92,400 hatchery-produced sockeye and 2.9 million hatchery pink salmon available in special harvest areas (SHAs). The purse seine harvest estimate for the 2020 season was 73 Chinook, 58,933 sockeye, 526 coho, 120,796 pink, and 815 chum salmon with 15 permit holders reporting deliveries. This compares to a previous 10-year average harvest of 92 Chinook, 37,172 sockeye, 1,301 coho, 145,732 pink, and 1,228 chum salmon.

The 2020 preliminary set gillnet harvest estimate was 405 Chinook, 12,463 sockeye, 2,680 coho, 35,133 pink, and 1,918 chum salmon with 17 permit holders reporting deliveries. The previous 10-year average harvest for this gear type was 322 Chinook, 25,556 sockeye, 2,319 coho, 17,746 pink, and 4,207 chum salmon. In addition, 15,892 sockeye and 795,068 pink salmon were harvested by CIAA from SHAs in this district for cost recovery.

There are eight sustainable escapement goals (SEGs) in the Southern District; six for pink salmon, one for chum and one for sockeye salmon. Escapement at the English Bay River weir was 31,486 sockeye salmon, which exceeded the upper bound of the SEG of 6,000–13,500 for this system. Pink salmon escapements were below the lower end of the SEG range for Humpy and China Poot creeks, and above the upper bound for Tutka, Barabara, Seldovia, and Port Graham creeks. Chum salmon escapement in the Port Graham River was below the SEG range.

#### ***Kamishak Bay District***

The 2020 preseason commercial harvest forecast for the Kamishak Bay District was 51,000 sockeye, 3,800 coho, 7,500 pink, and 14,100 chum salmon. Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA) forecasted a run of 34,500 sockeye salmon to the Kirschner Lake remote release site. The Kamishak Bay District commercial harvest was confidential due to fewer than three permit holders reporting deliveries. The previous 10-year average is 41,924 sockeye, 1,376 coho, 40,084 pink, and 16,968 chum salmon harvested in the commercial fishery. In addition, 11,506 sockeye salmon were harvested by CIAA from the Kirschner Lake SHA for cost recovery purposes.

There are 13 SEGs in the Kamishak District; seven for chum salmon, three for sockeye, and three for pink salmon. Chum salmon escapement was within the SEG range in the Iniskin river, above the range in the Bruin, and Big and Little Kamishak rivers, and below in the McNeil River, Cottonwood Creek and Ursus Cove systems. Sockeye salmon escapement to Chenik Lake was within the SEG range, however escapement to Mikfik Lake for this species was below the minimum SEG. Sockeye salmon escapement to Amakdedori Creek was above the SEG range.

#### ***Outer District***

The 2020 preseason commercial harvest forecast for the Outer District was 3,800 sockeye, 78,400 pink, and 60,600 chum salmon. The harvest, from 14 permit holders that participated, was 3 Chinook, 200 sockeye, 86 coho, 1,304,945 pink, and

4,338 chum salmon. This harvest compares to previous 10-year averages of 21 Chinook, 9,159 sockeye, 352 coho, 996,676 pink, and 57,275 chum salmon.

There are 15 SEGs in the Outer District; nine for pink salmon, four for chum and two for sockeye salmon (Table 2). Pink salmon escapement were within their respective SEG ranges at South Nuka Island, Port Chatham, and Island creeks, above their SEG ranges at both Windy Bay creeks, Port Dick Creek, and Dogfish Lagoon creeks, and below the SEG ranges at Rocky River and Desire Lake Creek. Chum salmon escapement was above the SEG range for the Rocky River, and below the SEG ranges for Dogfish Lagoon creeks, as well as Port Dick and Island creeks.

### ***Eastern District***

Due to small runs in the last 10 years, no wild stock sockeye or pink salmon were forecast to be available for commercial harvest from the Eastern District in 2020. CIAA forecasted a total run of 494,200 sockeye salmon to Resurrection Bay facilities with 350,000 fish needed for broodstock and cost recovery purposes. Total cost recovery harvest from this district was 62,414 sockeye salmon. An additional 99 sockeye and 370 coho salmon were donated at the weir to members of the public. Portions of Resurrection Bay were open for commercial harvest from June 22 through July 17. Commercial harvest during this period is confidential due to fewer than three permit holders reporting harvests. CIAA passed 12,760 sockeye salmon through the Bear Creek weir in 2020. However, 4,538 sockeye salmon were subsequently removed from Bear Lake for broodstock, leaving a final escapement of 8,222 fish, which is within the SEG range for this stock. The only other index system in the Eastern District is Aialik Lake and is for sockeye salmon. Final escapement to this system was within its established SEG range.

Under Alaska's Health Orders 5, 6, and 8, commercial fishing is an Essential Business and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>.

Table 1.—Lower Cook Inlet commercial salmon harvest based on preliminary fish ticket data, 2020.

District (or hatchery)	Permits	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
Southern District	15	73	58,933	526	120,796	815	181,143
Outer District	14	3	200	86	1,304,945	4,338	1,309,572
Eastern District	---		---		---	---	---
Kamishak Bay District	---		---		---	---	---
Purse seine preliminary total	15	76	102,837	612	1,434,450	7,371	1,545,346
Southern District	17	405	12,463	2,680	35,133	1,918	52,599
Set gillnet preliminary total	17	405	12,463	2,680	35,133	1,918	52,599
Commercial common property preliminary total		481	115,300	3,292	1,469,583	9,289	1,597,945
Hatchery cost recovery preliminary harvests							
Tutka Lagoon SHA			15,775	140	635,184	173	651,272
Port Graham SHA			42	3	159,884	7	159,936
Hazel Lake SHA			75				75
Resurrection Bay SHA			62,414			4	62,418
Kirschner Lake SHA			11,506		547	8	12,061
Hatchery cost recovery preliminary total		0	89,812	143	795,615	192	885,762
LCI preliminary total harvest		537	205,388	3,949	2,265,238	9,482	2,484,224

Table 2.—2020 Escapements and sustainable escapement goal ranges in Lower Cook Inlet, Alaska.

Stock	2020 Escapement	Above(+/ below(-) goal	Escapement		Monitoring method				Comments
			goal range		Aerial	Ground	Video	Weir	
			Lower	Upper					
Chum salmon (12 with goals)									
Port Graham River	660	(-)	1,200	2,700		X			
Dogfish Lagoon	1,246	(-)	3,500	8,600	X	X			used ground index
Rocky River	5,010	(+)	1,500	4,400	X				
Port Dick Creek	1,040	(-)	1,900	4,300	X	X			used ground index
Island Creek	1,399	(-)	5,100	11,900	X	X			used ground index
Big Kamishak River	19,391	(+)	6,800	15,600	X				
Little Kamishak River	38,591	(+)	8,000	16,800	X				
McNeil River	8,850	(-)	24,000	48,000	X				
Bruin River	22,206	(+)	5,200	10,000	X				
Ursus Cove	4,367	(-)	5,900	10,100	X				
Cottonwood Creek	679	(-)	5,200	12,200	X				
Iniskin Bay	8,804		5,900	13,600	X				
Pink salmon (18 with goals)									
Humpy Creek	232	(-)	17,500	51,400		X			
China Poot Creek	235	(-)	2,500	6,300		X			
Tutka Creek	114,986	(+)	6,500	17,000		X			
Barabara Creek	6,633	(+)	2,000	5,600		X			
Seldovia Creek	39,297	(+)	21,800	37,400		X			
Port Graham River	34,784	(+)	7,700	19,700		X			
Dogfish Lagoon Cks.	18,387	(+)	800	7,100	X	X			used ground index
Port Chatham	17,291		7,800	18,100	X	X			used ground index
Windy Creek Right	16,720	(+)	3,400	11,200	X				
Windy Creek Left	74,944	(+)	5,400	27,100	X				
Rocky River	8,310	(-)	11,700	54,800	X				
Port Dick Creek	108,219	(+)	17,900	49,800	X	X			used ground index
Island Creek	9,888		9,600	32,500	X	X			used ground index
S. Nuka Island Creek	3,943		2,800	11,200	X				
Desire Lake	1,357	(-)	1,500	18,000	X				
Bruin River	57,320		17,800	103,000	X				
Sunday Creek	4,715		4,400	24,900	X				
Brown's Peak Creek	21,034	(+)	2,600	17,500	X				
Sockeye salmon (8 with goals)									
English Bay	31,486	(+)	6,000	13,500	X			X	used weir count
Delight Lake	12,299		7,500	17,650	X			X	used weir count
Desire Lake	4,710	(-)	4,800	11,900	X				
Bear Lake	8,222		700	8,300				X	
Aialik Lake	4,020		3,200	5,400	X				
Mikfik Lake	305	(-)	3,400	11,000			X		
Chenik Lake	11,686		2,900	13,700			X		
Amakdedori Creek	6,992	(+)	1,200	2,600	X				